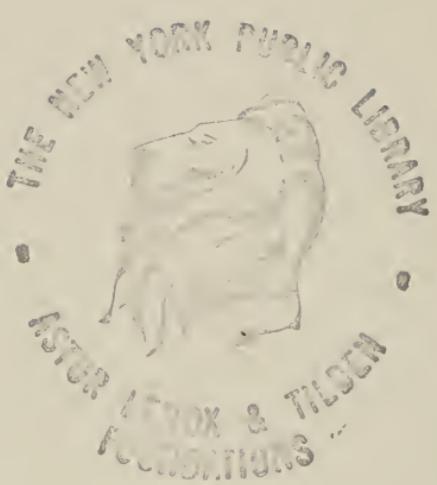


NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08179858 3

Balls Bluff
A MONOGRAPH



Paul Revere
from
Charles L. Peisson
December
1913.



SURGEON HENRY BRYANT LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANCIS W. PALFREY QUARTERMASTER CHARLES W. FOLSOM
MAJOR PAUL J. REVERE ADJUTANT CHARLES L. PERSON COLONEL WILLIAM RAYMOND LEE ASSISTANT SURGEON NATHAN HAYWARD

FIELD AND STAFF OF TWENTIETH MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEER INFANTRY 1861.

A Monograph.

BALL'S BLUFF

AN EPISODE AND ITS
CONSEQUENCES TO
SOME OF US.

*A paper written for the
Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*

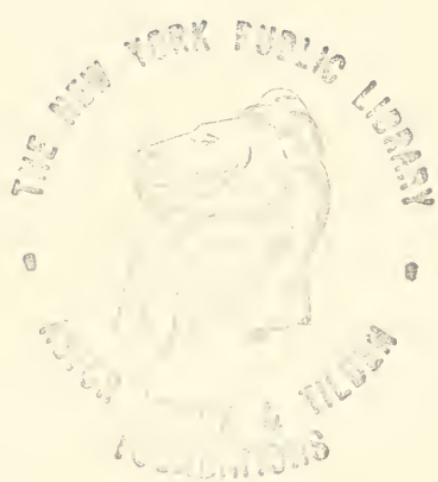
BY CHARLES LAWRENCE PEIRSON

Colonel and Brevet Brigadier General.

Privately printed by The Salem Press Company
with permission from the
Military Historical Society of Massachusetts
for the information later on of
Charles Lawrence Peirson, of New York, and
Charles Peirson Lyman, of Massachusetts

THE SALEM PRESS COMPANY
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

M D C C C C X I I I



THE EPISODE OF BALL'S BLUFF: AND ITS CONSEQUENCES TO SOME OF US.

This subject, like many of the periods of the Civil War, has been often described, and is familiar to the passing generation, but has, I believe, never before been placed upon your records, nor by an eye witness. Therefore, I venture to present it here.

The Twentieth Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteer Infantry, in which I had the honor to be a First Lieutenant and Adjutant, left Boston in the Autumn of 1861, for active service with the army. It was commanded by William Raymond

Lee, as Colonel,—a West Point graduate. Paul J. Revere was the Major. It had been, before the date of the Ball's Bluff engagement, but a few weeks in the service, and was stationed first at Washington, where I remember calling with Colonel Lee, who knew them, upon General Scott, then commanding the Armies of the United States, and upon General McClellan, then Commander of the Army of the Potomac.

The men of the Regiment, like all of the troops in the East at that time, were untrained by battle, never having heard the sound of a hostile bullet, and were of no more value as soldiers than were the Militia Regiments. Soldiers are not soldiers until they have been long enough together to have acquaintance with and respect for their officers, and have learned obedience

with a belief in discipline, with a willingness to abide by it. The earlier Battle of Bull Run, which became a rout for want of discipline, proved nothing and taught nothing except the after-thought of the necessity of discipline.

Up to this time (1861), the important arms of Cavalry and Artillery had been almost entirely neglected, most of the Cavalry not yet being armed or equipped.

General McClellan, who was in command when we joined the Army of the Potomac, was a thoroughly educated soldier. Soon after his graduation from West Point, he was employed in the construction of the first Pacific Railway. Later he was selected as one of a Commission to study the Art of War in Europe. For a time he was with the Allied Armies in the Crimean War, with every possi-

bility of instructing himself in siege operations, construction of military bridges and use of pontoons, and the accepted order of battle for the different arms of the service. Always occupied with matters of large importance, and with all these military experiences, he became the best equipped man for the command of the Union Army. General McClellan was the most popular Commander that the Army ever had. The men thoroughly believed in him. Certainly the country owed much to him for the thorough organization of the Army, which enabled less qualified Commanders, (before the time of Meade and Grant), to accomplish something with it.

The Twentieth Massachusetts Regiment was attached to General Stone's Corps of Observation, and was encamped

near Edward's Ferry on the Potomac River, some three miles from Ball's Bluff. General Stone was an accomplished soldier and we all respected him as such.

We were part of the Brigade of General F. W. Lander. I had known him well in Salem, where our families resided. He had had a most adventurous life as an explorer, having once crossed the continent from San Francisco to the East, alone, his companion having died on the journey. His courage was unquestioned, and he had military ability.

General Evans, who was the Confederate Commander of the enemy's forces near Leesburg, expected General Stone to attack him from Edward's Ferry, and was slow in moving troops to the vicinity of Ball's Bluff in consequence. On October 20th, General McClellan received

information that the enemy had withdrawn from their advanced post at Leesburg, and so advised General Stone, suggesting a demonstration to confirm this fact, or to accomplish it.

General Stone ordered a reconnaissance by a few men from the force on Harrison's Island, which was opposite the high bluff of Ball's Bluff. They crossed in the moonlight, advanced a short distance, and retired, reporting to General Stone that they had discovered a Rebel camp, which afterwards proved to be merely openings in an orchard, which looked to their excited eyes like tents. However, the camp was taken for granted, and five Companies of the 15th, with two companies of the 20th Massachusetts—about 450 men—were sent to capture it. They formed at the top of the Bluff, afterwards

moving forward on the right, where they encountered the picket reserve of the enemy, who retreated after a hot skirmish, and the Union force fell back to the Bluff. The companies mentioned had crossed the swiftly moving river in three small boats, whose carrying capacity was 28 persons per trip or 100 or more per hour, from Harrison's Island. The transportation proved utterly insufficient for moving the troops with any reasonable degree of rapidity. There were no pontoons or bridge material, or engineers capable of using them, provided or even thought of, and had not the quick intelligence and resourcefulness of Major Paul Revere discovered a scow, which was afterwards taken out of the canal and into the river, the movement could not have proceeded, especially as there were two howitzers to be taken across.

Colonel Baker, who commanded a Brigade in Landers Command (71st Pennsylvania or so-called California Regiment, and the 42nd New York, or Tammany Regiment), brought battalions of these regiments to reinforce our line, and under direct orders from General Stone, assumed command of the movement. Colonel Baker had some political reputation, and was a brave man, but he had no military experience or knowledge. He was shortly killed by a sharp-shooter from a tree between the combatants. The sharp-shooter immediately met with an accident and fell from the tree. A rush was made forward to bring back General Baker's body, in which I joined, having for the moment no duties to prevent me.

By this time there were many dead and wounded, and we used the boats to send

them over to the Island. The cannons were useless,—since the ammunition was exhausted, and the cannoneers killed or wounded. We had seen but little of the enemy during the day, as they were in the woods while our line was in the open, but they had, nevertheless, very seriously made known their presence to us. We were too ignorant to attempt any sort of cover. Later in the war the men learned to cover themselves, while prone on the ground, by piling knapsacks, fence rails, or any handy thing, throwing soil, or stones dug up with the hands or in tin dippers, against the barrier. The strength of the forces engaged was about 1600 Federals, against 3200 Confederates. Had there been proper transportation, this difference could have been remedied, but as it was, we felt our deficiency more

particularly when it was decided by Colonel Cogswell of the 42nd New York, who assumed command by seniority after the death of General Baker, to try to force our way through on the left.

He concluded to move to the left of Edward's Ferry, some three miles down the river, where there was a chance of reinforcement, and gave orders to that effect. He formed a column with the 42nd New York and the 71st. Pennsylvania at its head, and moved in that direction, but they were unable to make much progress, owing to the overwhelming fire of the enemy, who threw their whole force against us, and we were forced to fall back.

At this time I could not help observing the courage and gallant bearing of Captain (afterwards Colonel) John Markoe,

of the 71st Pennsylvania, and when I met him that night, a fellow prisoner at the Headquarters of Colonel Evans, I claimed his acquaintance. Captain Markoe formed one of our mess at Libby Prison, and thus originated the friendship which lasted through his life.

Meanwhile the wounded men were being slowly carried across the river. Later the enemy threw forward their line, and ours gave way, falling back at the Bluff at about 6 P. M., where we managed to hold on a while longer with our line still intact, and finally under orders continued the movement to the river bank. The men were permitted to save themselves by swimming, if they could, and many attempted this feat. It was not so very difficult for a strong man to cross in this way.

The Confederates could not come down to the Bluff without breaking up their organization, being unable to see, owing to the trees and darkness, what was in their front, and the firing by our men retarded them for some hours. They kept up, however, a continued firing, especially on the boats and the many swimmers. The scow, which had already carried over many wounded, now started on her last trip, but when starting, a number of uninjured men rushed forward, disturbing the trim of the boat, so that half way across the river she rolled over, and all were thrown out. Only one man is known to have escaped drowning. The scow floated down the stream and was lost. The small boats were riddled by bullets and disappeared, and all those who had not escaped were taken prisoners during the night.

Colonel Lee of the Twentieth Regiment was a man over middle age, therefore much beyond the rest of us in years, and could not swim the river. He was urged to go in one of the boats, but refused to do so while a single wounded man remained on the Virginia shore. Therefore, some of us whose duty, as we saw it, lay in that direction, accompanied him up the river, hoping if unmolested to reach some Union forces in that quarter. Finding after a while a boat, for which we gave a colored man our only ten dollar gold piece, we endeavored to use it, but a hole in the bottom of it seemed, in the presence of hostile bullets, to make it undesirable, so we proceeded along the bank to a more secure position, where we made a raft of fence rails bound together with our sword belts. It was successfully launched, but before

we could use it we were dismayed to see it slowly disappear to rest on the bottom of the river.

Proceeding again, our party at this time being Major Revere, Doctor Revere and Lieutenant Perry, besides Colonel Lee and myself, we came to what we thought might be an outpost. While endeavoring to avoid it, we found ourselves on the top of a farmer's gate, and at that moment we were hailed with the remark, "Who goes there?" from a company of Cavalry, whose carbines were pointed at us, and unpleasantly near our faces. Replying that we would explain if the fire was delayed for a moment, we completed our movement and surrendered to the inevitable.

Our captors politely accepted our pistols and swords, I being obliged to give

up the sword of Lieutenant William Putnam of the 20th Regiment, a young Harvard student, from whom I had taken it as he lay mortally wounded on the battle field. This sword, which I had in mistaken kindness taken, was accidentally discovered in Philadelphia some years since, and it being marked with the name, was returned to his mother, who received it almost as a message from Heaven.

We were taken on foot to the Headquarters of the General in Command of their forces in the Town of Leesburg, Virginia, where were gathered other prisoners. By this time night had succeeded day. We were nearly exhausted, and were not cheered by the thought that we were prisoners of war about to begin our captivity.

At this date there was no Cartel of Ex-

change. Our imagination recalled prisons of all sorts, among them Dartmoor, about which we had heard in our childhood. The future seemed dim, but when the General in command offered to restore us to our friends upon our agreement not to serve again against the Confederacy, no one was found willing to accept the offer. Indeed we were somewhat abusive in chiding him for offering such terms to gentlemen, and suggested that he was hardly worthy of the appellation. His patience was exhausted by the conversation that followed and we were hurriedly started towards Richmond, without waiting for rations.

We passed through the Battlefield of Bull Run, and halting there were shown into a stone structure which had been the target for many cannon balls from both

sides during the battle. Here was given about midnight a meal, the first for 24 hours, which we managed to slightly cook by making fires upon the floor with laths wrenched from the ceiling. Somewhat refreshed we took passage in open freight cars for Richmond and Libby Prison.

Our march was over and we began, as prisoners of war, the long, weary months in Libby Prison.

I have termed the affair of Ball's Bluff an Episode. It certainly formed no part of a movement by other troops. It was only casually directed by General McClellan, and only informally by General Stone. The results astonished both of these gentlemen.

The action arose from a misunderstanding caused by a quartermaster's excited imagination. The details of trans-

portation were not thought out beforehand by anyone, nor time given to their perfection.

General McCall, who had a force not far off, which was not called into action, expresses himself as "unable to account for Stone's movement," — thought it injudicious. It proved afterwards that Stone had not the means to cross the river. He could not have crossed in the face of the "enemy."

General Lander says, "Stone was tripped up by circumstances. If we had orders to cross that stream, we would have had them a week beforehand."

General McClellan says to the Committee on the Conduct of the War, who (judged by the questions which they put), seemed to consider themselves educated soldiers, competent to give orders in act-

ual battle,—“Telegraphed Stone after Baker fell. Intrench yourselves on the Virginia side and await reinforcements if necessary. Telegraphed Banks to support him with three brigades. On the 22nd inst. I went personally to the scene of operation (probably to Edward's Ferry), and after ascertaining that the enemy were strengthening themselves at Leesburg, and that the means of crossing or recrossing were very insufficient, I withdrew our forces to the Virginia side.”

General Meade in his published letters, (he then commanded a Brigade in McCall's Division), writes October 24th, “Regarding Ball's Bluff, as far as I can gather, the whole affair was a bungle from beginning to end. The worst part of the business is that at the very time our people were contending against such

odds, the advance of McCall's division was only 10 miles off and had we been ordered forward instead of back, we could have captured the whole of them."

Such is contemporary judgment and criticism.

The following stanzas were written by Brigadier General F. W. Lander on hearing that the Confederate Troops said,— "Fewer of the Massachusetts officers would have been killed, had they not been too proud to surrender."

Aye, deem us proud, for we are more
Than proud of all our mighty dead;
Proud of the bleak and rock-bound shore
A crowned oppressor cannot tread.

Proud of each rock, and wood and glen,
Of every river, lake and plain;
Proud of the calm and earnest men,
Who claim the right and will to reign.

Proud of the men who gave us birth,
Who battled with the stormy wave,
To sweep the Red Man from the Earth,
And build their homes upon his grave.

Proud of the holy summer morn
They traced in blood upon its sod;
The rights of freeman yet unborn;
Proud of their language and their God.

Proud that beneath our proudest dome,
And round the cottage cradled hearth,
There is a welcome and a home
For every stricken race on earth.

Proud that yon slowly sinking sun
Saw drowning lips grow white in prayer,
O'er such brief acts of duty done,
As honor gathers from despair.

Pride—'tis our watchword, "Clear the
boats,"
"Holmes, Putnam, Bartlett, Peirson—
Here"

And while this crazy wherry floats,
"Let's save our wounded," cries Revere.

Old State,—some souls are rudely sped—
This record for thy Twentieth Corps,—
Imprisoned, wounded, dying, dead,
It only asks,—"Has Sparta more?"

The tobacco warehouse which we occupied, is on the main street of Richmond. It was similar to several other buildings and they were all used as Military Prisons, and all called Libby Prison. It is a large, three-story building and built as it was, in a most substantial manner, was well adapted for a Military Prison. The first floor was allotted to the officers captured, some 70 in number, and the other stories filled with the men, perhaps 250 of them. In the centre of the lower or officers' floor is placed the heavy machinery for press-

ing and preparing the tobacco, thus dividing the space into two equal sections, and occupying one-half of the floor space, which was 65 x 45 feet.

The windows on the street floor are well protected by iron bars, while those opposite are unprovided with bars, and open upon the yard, but guarded by sentinels stationed there, with orders to shoot any prisoners in either story who lean out of the windows. Seven men were shot by these guardsmen while I was confined there. Those dying in the nearby hospital were taken to this yard for shipment elsewhere in wagons.

We had no inducement to peer inquisitively from the windows. The windows on the street, however, afforded us some more interesting views. Some of the towns-people were almost always out-

side-lookers-in, and occasionally someone would, when unnoticed by the guard at the entrance, show a sign of sympathy. We frequently saw Jeff Davis riding by, and we always took pains to regale him with pertinent remarks befitting his high rank, or with some applicable song. One song was called the Prison Song, to the tune of,—“John Brown’s Body lies a-Slumbering in the Ground.” The words, descriptive of our situation, I do not remember, but the refrain ran,—“Roll on Sweet Moments, Roll on, and let the poor prisoners go home, go home.”

There were ten mess tables made of rough boards, and benches or stools. The fare was meagre; the floor hard for sleeping, though later we procured some cots; the covering insufficient, and the vermin ineffaceable pests. We had al-

most no books, nothing to help pass the time. We took daily walks by reliefs, up and down one side of our scanty quarters. There was a daily roll call, when chaffing the Officer of the Day gave slight amusement. At one time three or four of our companions escaped from prison, passing the guard by a show of authority. The wearing of Federal uniforms secured on the field of battle was so common in the streets, that the guards could hardly tell friends from foe.

At that time the whole Rebel Army was encamped near Richmond, and in consequence it availed nothing to be outside the walls of the prison. The escaped prisoners were in a day or two brought back and put in irons. While they were gone we had with some success answered for their names at Roll Call from a distant

part of the room. We devised a way of unlocking the irons, and by putting a detail of our men to give warning of the approach of officials, were able to give some relief to the sufferers.

The Commander of the Prison was the notorious Wirtz, afterwards hung for cruelty to prisoners by the United States Government. One of his juniors was a Lieutenant Todd, said to be a brother of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. He was always abusing Lincoln, and was especially strict and disagreeable, even more so than his superior, Wirtz.

We formed a society, and held meetings, at which speeches were made and stories told, more or less accurate. When any new officers, taken on the various battle-fields, came, we initiated them, and, in the openness of their confidence, got from

them the story of their early lives and loves, which afforded us amusement, until they discovered a way to be brief in their statements.

The privates, who were mostly intelligent volunteers, had similar difficulty in passing time. They had, however, one successful thing which interested them for a time. The money then in circulation in Richmond consisted entirely of paper money, in the form of Corporation notes, and those of business firms, plank roads, or private bankers, etc.

Our men discovered in their quarters a half barrel of such material, needing only to be signed and issued. This was readily accomplished, and as they took care to have the issue in fractional amounts, it was never questioned, and served its purpose of increasing the Cur-

rency of the Realm. Through the kindness of one of the guards, this served to supply them with tea and tobacco purchased for them in the city.

One day General Winder, a former member of the U. S. A., now commanding the District of Richmond, came with the staff in full uniform to make an official visit to the prison. He read an order of the Confederate War Department, directing him to select Officers bearing the highest rank, to be held as hostage for the lives of as many Privateer men who were held in Federal Prisons under the charge of piracy on the High Seas. The order required the hostages to be confined in the cells reserved for prisoners accused of infamous crimes. The hostages selected, seven in number, were under this order, taken to Henrico County Jail, a stone

building in Richmond, with high windows looking out upon a stone wall not ten feet off, of equal height with the jail.

Colonel Lee and Major Revere were among the chosen seven who were taken to the jail, where their hardships were more than ours were, who remained in Libby Prison. Colonel Lee writes to the Adjutant, dated Cell No.—, County Jail. "Dear C.,—We are all well. This is indeed a prison. We have two meals a day. I will not dwell upon our situation. Seven persons in one cell, 11 x 17 feet, in which all the duties of life are met. Iron grated door and two high grated windows. Does the sun shine? Is it pleasant to look on the sky? A County Jail is not a fit place for men charged with constructive crimes. No despondent thoughts cross our manhood. Come what may,

that shall stand a rich legacy to the dear ones who cluster about our home altars."

Moved by this recital, seven officers of those remaining in Libby Prison petitioned General Winder for leave to take the place of the hostages, but it was refused. In February the hostages were returned to the warehouse, their former prison, and afterwards exchanged. In due time, after much exertion on the part of the Union Officers, the Privateers were released as pirates and turned over to the Navy Department. Finally we were all exchanged for officers of equal rank held in Northern prisons, and were able after a short vacation, of which we stood in need, to return to our Regiments, then serving with the Army of the Potomac on the Peninsula. We had lost so much weight that our clothes were all a misfit and we needed a new supply.

When we exchanged in 1862, I was sent to Norfolk on my way to Fortress Monroe. The Confederate steamer which carried us met the Federal steamer half way. When we saw again the Stars and Stripes we were overpowered with emotion, and fell with streaming eyes upon our knees on the deck, raising our arms to Heaven and offering thanks to God for all his mercies.

SUPPLEMENTARY

MILITARY RECORD
OF WRITER.

Lieutenant and Adjutant, July 1, 1861

Lieutenant-Colonel, Aug. 30, 1862

Colonel, July 13, 1864

Colonel by Brevet for conduct in the battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, Virginia

Brigadier-General by Brevet for conduct in the battles on the Weldon, Richmond Virginia

BATTLES IN WHICH THE WRITER PARTICIPATED.

Names of battles as authorized by the War Department to be borne on the Battle Flags of the regiments engaged.

Ball's Bluff
Yorktown
West Point
Seven Pines
Fair Oaks
Peach Orchard
Savages Station
White Oak Swamp
Glendale
Malvern Hill
Mine Run
Wilderness
Spottsylvania
Petersburg
Weldon Railroad

SERVICE.

Twentieth Massachusetts Vol. Infantry
Thirty-ninth Mass. Volunteer Infantry
Second Corps, Second Division
First Corps, Second Division
Fifth Corps, Third Division
Army of the Potomac
Served on staff of Brigadier General
N. J. T. Dana
Served on staff of Major General John
Sedgwick

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF THE TIME.

In the Field, October 24, 1861

General F. W. Lander writes to my mother: "It is with regret that I am compelled to inform you that Charles is taken prisoner by the Confederate Troops. Proper means of transportation not having been provided our troops outnumbered five to one could not be reinforced. Colonel Lee, 20th Massachusetts Regiment, refused to retreat until his wounded were on board the boats. Your son, Major Revere, and Surgeon Revere as gallant officers necessarily remained with their

Colonel. Out of the 480 men of the 20th Massachusetts in that action we have lost in killed and missing 156 men aside from which brought off 45 wounded."

Boston, October 25, 1861

The Governor of Massachusetts writes to my mother: "I grieve to inform you that your son, Adjutant Charles L. Peirson, was taken prisoner with Colonel Lee, Major Revere, Doctor Revere and Lieut. Perry. The newspapers say that these officers became prisoners through their gallantry having given up their boat to the wounded soldiers. This act of disinterestedness is exactly what I should have expected from these brave and generous officers. I hope that an early exchange may restore your son to the service."

Signed,

JOHN A. ANDREW, *Governor.*

Richmond, November 11, 1861

To my brother: "I avail myself of an offered opportunity of sending to inform you of my continued health. Yesterday the Commander of the Prison, General Winder, appeared with an imposing array of Colonels to assist him and read an order of the Confederate War Department about Hostages for the privateers held as pirates in New York with threatened hanging. Of course we cannot comment upon such a proceeding but you can be assured that the present privations that we all are subjected to are borne uncomplainingly and that all future ones will be also. We will never give them the satisfaction of seeing us flinch. It affords me no pleasure to write when I know that my letter is to be read half a dozen times in its passage."

EXTRACTS FROM A DIARY WRITTEN IN LIBBY PRISON

Boston, April 13, 1861

War began—Fort Sumter fired upon.

Richmond, November 5, 1861

Received letter from Wm. G. Saltonstall very kindly offering to send me anything.

Richmond, November 14, 1861

Dr. Gibson, C. S. Army, sent for us and we met him in the office next door. He stated that he had received a letter from Dr. J. Mason Warren of Boston asking his assistance on my behalf and also that of my fellow prisoners. Dr. Gibson offered in a general way to do anything in his power—and I told him that when I was in want I should take the liberty of calling upon him. There were many things that he might have offered to do, but which I would not ask for.

Richmond, December 21, 1861

Received letter from W. G. Saltonstall informing me about his accident on board the "Minnesota."

Richmond, December 31, 1861

The last of the year—1861—Probably the most momentous one since we were a people. God grant the next may bring peace to our unhappy land.

The more I see of this terrible war, the more I deplore it and the more I see the necessity of continuing it. Our cause is even more desperate than theirs—we are fighting for liberty and against ignorance. These people are being taught to hate with a bitter hate three quarters of the people on this Continent.

The Southern Press teems with scurrilous editorials against the Yankees, ridicu-

lous to us who read them here, but I believe they are believed by the common people of the South. Years will not dispel this feeling, even if we come together again, which I fear will never be the case. God grant that our rulers will act with reason and justice, that the people may be brought to see that Slavery is not the object of this War and should have no part in it whatever, that we may bring back our Government to a firm basis of truth, justice and eternal right and that Good Will toward men shall be our watch-word. These are my old year prayers; may they be heard in Heaven.

Richmond, January 1, 1862

The year opens up on me yet a prisoner in Richmond. Well, I have much to be grateful for. I hear from my friends at

home who are well and do not forget me. My own health remains, though not unimpaired, yet comparatively good, nor am I suffering for want of food and clothing.

We are conscious of the fact that being here deprives us of experience, rank and opportunity which those who were more fortunate enjoy, but we are in strong hope that another month or two will end this imprisonment and this useless aimless life.

Richmond, January 7, 1862

One day passes so much like another that there are but a few incidents to take note of. In the morning we read the papers, talk about the contents and walk about the apartment for exercise. In the evening we often play at cards but oftener read or write. There is not one redeeming quality about this life. The mind cannot

be brought down to study and is hardly interested in Dickens or Scott or in the one volume of Shakespeare which we had before he went to Jail. Very many of our associates are men of vulgar tastes or habits, so that their society is anything but agreeable. Noise and confusion reign most of the time with a constant jarring of one's sensibilities.

Richmond, January 14, 1862

Saw General Winder at his office at 4 P. M. and rode there on horseback in company with Lieutenant Hartstone. The exercise was delightful—distance $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

General Winder received me with politeness and told me that his Government refused to exchange me for a citizen. I then expressed to him my belief that I

could through the influence of my friends effect a change in the treatment of the Privateers could I be sent with the assurance of a willingness to reciprocate. By his advice I made the application in writing through him to the Confederate Secretary of War. I expect to hear the result of my application in a day or two. He also gave me a pass to the Jail where the Hostages are confined, the first time that any of us have had permission to enter.

Colonel Lee and Major Revere were delighted to see me but my heart sank within me when I saw the hole that they were in. No prison in New England is so miserable and uncomfortable. I believe that no seven imprisoned men in the North are so illy cared for as these.

Richmond, January 19, 1862

Letter to Gen. J. H. Winder: "General:—

The undersigned Commissioned officers of the United States Army respectfully ask your attention to the following proposition:

“Learning that there are at Fortress Monroe and at Norfolk officers of the Confederate States Army including Col. Pegram and other field officers part of whom are placed upon their parole and all seeking an exchange—We propose that they be exchanged rank for rank with Col. Lee and other officers now confined in Henrico County Jail and that we be permitted to take their places to be held as hostages for the men confined in New York. Our reasons for this application are the ill health of the officers referred to, arising from the unwholesome place in which they are confined. The fact that they have since their confinement been treated

more rigorously than the Privateers in New York (in proof of which we refer you to the Hon. M. Faulkner of the Confederacy), contrary as we believe to your own expressed intentions, and because our own rank is sufficiently above that of the Privateers to make the accomplishment of your object equally safe and more humane. We ask your consideration of the fact that had you not held field officers as prisoners of war we should have in all probability occupied their places and that you would have considered the safety of the privateers sufficiently guaranteed. Also if the officers lost their characters as prisoners of war, when they were forced to assume that of Hostages, should they not receive equal treatment with their substitutes, and is rank a matter of moment? On the other hand if they are still to be

considered as Prisoners of War ought they not to be treated as such, and do you not gain as much as ourselves in exchanging them for officers of equal rank?"

Very respectfully your Obedient Servants,

CHARLES L. PEIRSON, Adjutant 20th
Mass. Regt. for Col. Lee

GEORGE B. PERRY, Lieut. 20th Mass.
Regt. for Major Revere.

W. E. MERRILL, United States Engineers for Col. Cogswell.

J. E. GREEN, Lieut. 15th Mass. Regt.
for Col. Wood.

J. H. HOOPER, Lieut. 15th Mass. Regt.
for Capt. Bowman.

JOHN MARKOE, Capt. 71 Penn. Regt.
C. M. HOOPER, Lieut. 71 Penn. Regt."

Richmond, January 19, 1862

Visited the Jail and spent the morning

there; my last day in prison. Tomorrow I shall be again under the Stars and Stripes. So many pleasant hopes and memories mingle with the plans for the release of my friends that my mind is too full for definite thought or writing. I have received a passport which reads thus:—"permission is granted C. L. P. to visit Norfolk upon honor not to communicate in writing or verbally for publication any fact ascertained which if known to the enemy might be injurious to the Confederate States of America." I have also signed a parole to take no part in the existing hostilities until released or exchanged. Had an interview with General Winder who stated to me officially for his Government that if the Privateers are placed as prisoners of war the Hostages shall secure the same treatment. Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes!

Washington, January 30, 1862

Waited before breakfast from 10 A. M. (at which time I had the day before arranged an interview) until 4 P. M. to see General McClellan. Saw Secretary Stanton and met General Stone at General McClellan's office. Saw also Hon. H. M. Rice of Minnesota and Hon. A. H. Rice of Massachusetts.

January 31

Waited all the morning at General McClellan's office. Wrote to Governor Andrew, called on Hon. Charles Sumner —met Mr. John M. Forbes of Boston who gave me much help in seeing influential people. Captains W. P. Mason, R. B. Irwin, McMahon, Arthur McClellan (brother of the General), Aides de Camp to the General were very polite to me. Secretary Stanton gave me a

copy of the order transferring the Privateers to the War Department. This secures the release of my friends.

